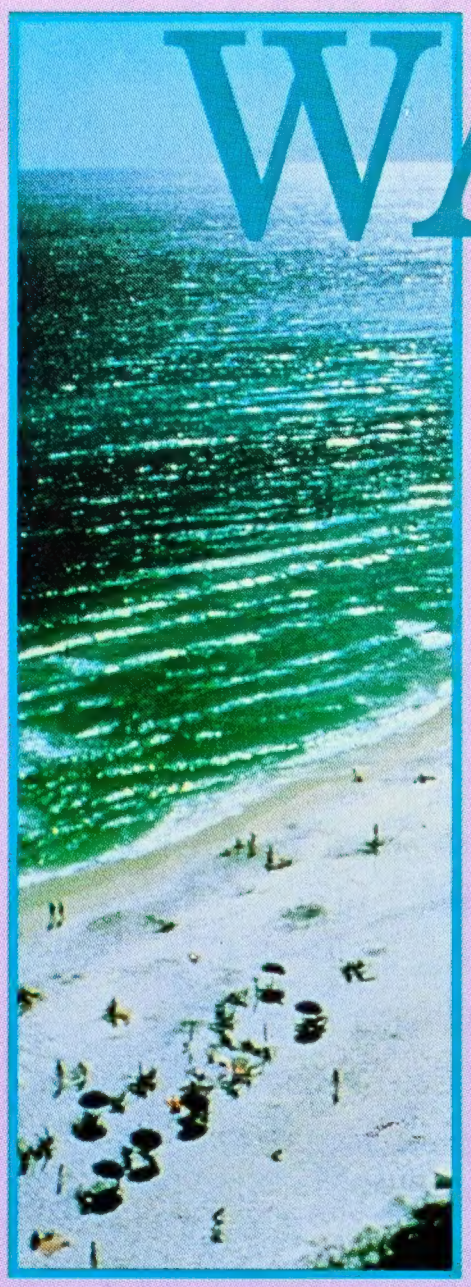
WALTON COUNTY FLORIDA

Official Chamber of Commerce
Business Directory and
Visitors' Guide



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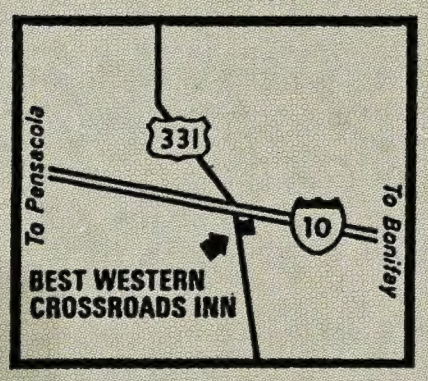

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Overlooking the sugar-white sands and emerald waters of the Gulf of Mexico at Sandestin, Elephant Walk will take you on a journey of the imagination.

Experience fresh seafood, choice steaks, duckling and nightly chef's specials in the area's most unusual restaurant.

Elephant Walk is also the ideal setting for your special event or private party. Reservations required. Call 267-4800.

elephant walk™

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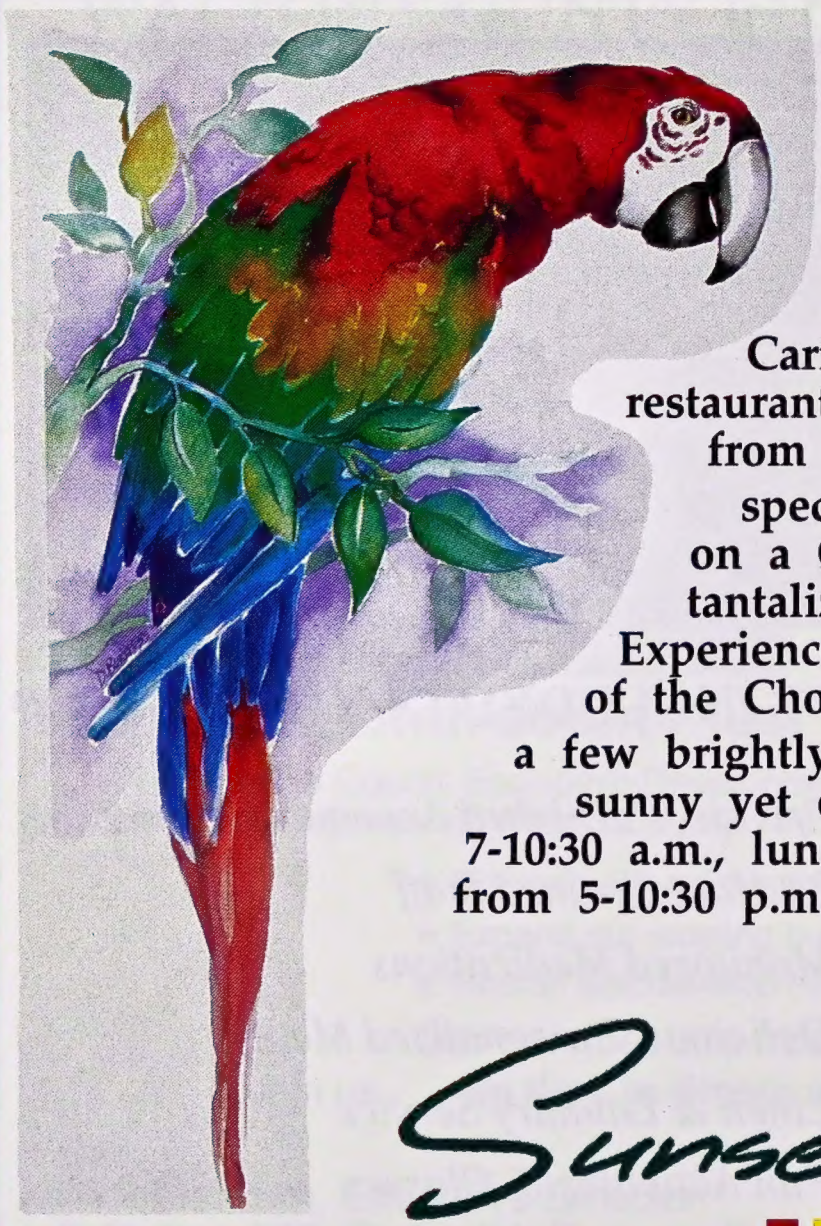

Come Savor the Flavor of the Islands

Capture the excitement of the Caribbean at Sandestin's sensational new restaurant, Sunset Bay Café • a Grille. Choose from a feast of steaks, seafood, chops and specialty items, all prepared to perfection on a California open grill, or select from a tantalizing array of salad and pasta entrées. Experience the flavor with an enchanting view of the Choctawhatchee Bay and the company of a few brightly feathered tropical friends. Enjoy our sunny yet elegant atmosphere for breakfast from 7-10:30 a.m., lunch from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m., and dinner from 5-10:30 p.m., daily. Call 267-7108 for reservations.

Sunset Bay Café

a grille

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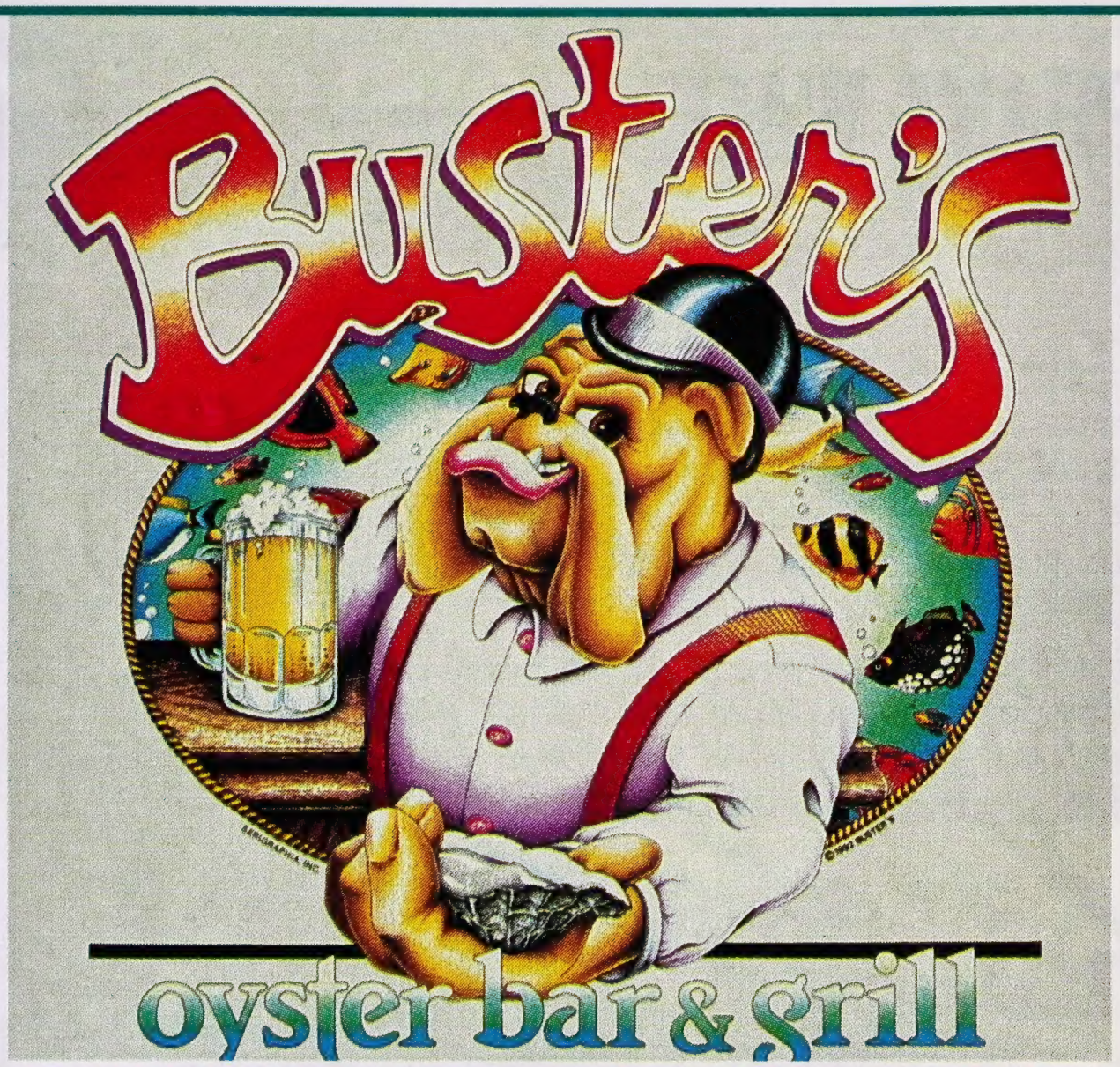

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WALTON COUNTY FLORIDA

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Walton County Chamber of Commerce
Sarah Page Cunningham, Executive Director
P.O. Box 29, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433
(904) 892-3191
Information Center
Hwys. 331S. and 98, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459
(904) 267-3511

Photos courtesy of Florida Division of Tourism (Chautauqua Hall of Brotherhood), and Kimberly C. Meeks (surf).

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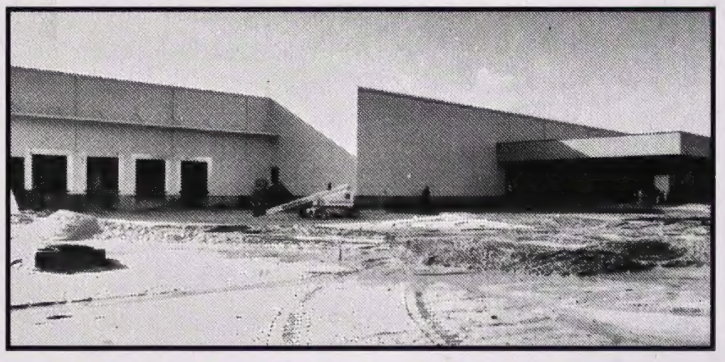

"Economic growth doesn't 'just' happen . . . it is 'made' to happen."

The Walton County Economic Development Council is a driving force in the economic growth and development of Walton County. We are facilitators and planners. Our mission is simple:

★ Maintain our existing business and industry
★ Expand our existing business and industry
★ Recruit and develop new business and industry

Our services are free and our goal is growth.

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Call:
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An arm of the Walton County Chamber of Commerce

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WELCOME TO

WALTON COUNTY FLORIDA

Stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Alabama state line, Walton County covers more than a thousand square miles, making it Florida's seventh largest county, patchworked by rich farmlands, all amidst the high-tech facilities of the free world's largest Air Force Base, Walton County offers a varied landscape of striking beauty the equal of any in our nation.

Visitors have been drawn to the serene beauty of Walton County from as far back as the 1800's. One such visitor was Dr. A. H. Gillet of the New York Chautauqua, who came in search of a suitable location for the Chautauqua Winter Assembly and felt that DeFuniak Springs would do nicely. The Florida Chautauqua Association was organized in August, 1884, and the first assembly was held from February 10 to March 7, 1885. The announcement of the assembly attracted much attention, and families from near and far gathered about the town where they saw the realization of their desire for better

Historic buildings like the Chautauqua Auditorium and beaches laced with sugar-white sand and sea oats contrast with the hi-tech satellite tracking facility, Site C-6, identifying the diversity of this beautiful county.

Beach: Photos Plus, Linda S. Patterson; Auditorium: FL Dept. of Commerce, Division of Tourism.

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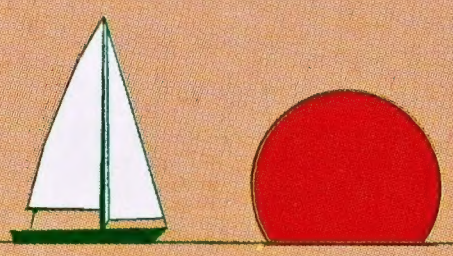

2100 Magnolia Street
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459
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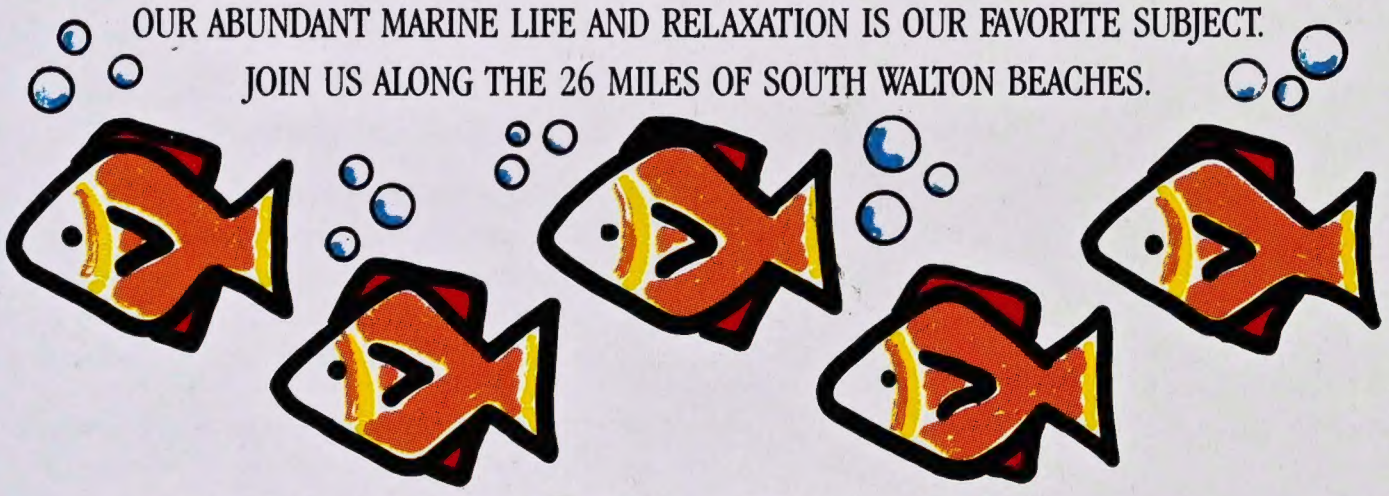
educational advantages. The Florida Chautauqua programs continued through 1922. Today's Chautauqua Festival Association preserves the "spirit of Chautauqua" through the events of its annual spring festival.

Walton County has a permanent population of some 29,000. The three incorporated areas include the county seat of DeFuniak Springs and the smaller communities of Paxton and Freeport. Residents are considered friendly, honest, courteous, and willing to embrace hard work. Whether you're retiring, moving here with a job, or spending a few vacation weeks, you'll find Waltonians make excellent neighbors.

Businesses, too, find a home in Walton County — from shipbuilding on the coast to dairy farming and beef cattle raising inland. Tourism creates jobs for thousands. Major highways, ample utilities, and plenty of undeveloped land make Walton County an ideal site for new or relocating businesses and industries.

JOIN THE CROWD

JOIN US IN NORTHWEST FLORIDA, A PART OF FLORIDA WHERE EMERALD GREEN WATERS LAP PLAYFULLY ON SUGAR WHITE BEACHES. WHERE THE WORD "CROWD" REFERS TO OUR ABUNDANT MARINE LIFE AND RELAXATION IS OUR FAVORITE SUBJECT. JOIN US ALONG THE 26 MILES OF SOUTH WALTON BEACHES.



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Councilman Barbara Dykeman
Councilman Paul M. "Mac" Work, Jr.
Councilman Mark Anderson
Councilman Opal Davidson
City Manager Michael G. Standley
City Clerk H. Diane Dudley
City Attorney Clayton Adkinson
Director of Finance Sara W. Wilson
Building Inspector Patrick Pilcher
Police Chief Clinton Hooks
Fire Chief Bill Yearwood

FOR MORE INFORMATION WRITE TO:
Mr. Michael Standley
City Manager
CITY OF DeFUNIAK SPRINGS
WALTON COUNTY
715 West Nelson Avenue
P.O. Box 685
DeFuniak Springs, Florida 32433
(904) 892-8500

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WALTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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WILSON HOLLEY ..... DIST. 3
GORDON PORTER ..... DIST. 4
ROBERT G. FLEET ..... DIST. 5

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Administrative Supervisor 892-8156
Ambulance Service
DeFuniak Springs & Freeport 892-5515
Paxton 834-2123
South Walton 267-2333
Ambulance Billing 892-5315
Building Dept. ..... 892-8160 or 8161
Civil Defense 892-8065
Grants Dept. 892-8185
North Walton Mosquito Control 892-8183
Planning & Zoning 892-8157
Public Works Dept. ..... 892-8108 or 892-8109
Purchasing Dept. 892-8176
Road & Bridge 892-8102
Section & Housing 892-8185

Board of County Commissioners
Walton County, Florida
P.O. Box 1260, 6th St. & Sloss Ave.
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

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FUN UNDER THE WALTON COUNTY SUN

Photos Plus, Linda S. Patterson

From parasailing above our unspoiled beaches to spending a day out on the links, the opportunities for outdoor activities are endless in Walton County.

Walton County is a recreational paradise. Due to the year-round mild climate, numerous bodies of water, 26 miles of white sand beaches, acres of undeveloped land, and the Eglin Wildlife Management Area, both residents and visitors find nearly unlimited opportunities for outdoor activities.

Fishing

The Gulf of Mexico, numerous freshwater lakes, Choctawhatchee Bay, and the rivers leading off the bay provide a plethora of fresh-and saltwater fishing sites.

Freshwater anglers will pull in bass, bream, and catfish from such sites as Campbell Lake, the Choctawatchee River and Juniper Lake.

A number of fishing camps are scattered throughout the county with such offerings as cabins, campsites, boat ramps and bait. Some camps also offer boat rentals, groceries, and fishing licenses. For a complete listing of fishing camps in the county, drop by the Walton County Chamber of Commerce.

Saltwater fishermen hook flounder, speckled trout, and redfish in Choctawhatchee Bay. Piers, old pilings, wrecks, and rocks are found all around the bay and bayous and provide homes for many species of fish. Charter boats are available to take fishermen out into the Gulf of Mexico.

A license is required for both fresh- and saltwater fishing; however, individual saltwater licenses are not required if you are a passenger on a charter boat which carriers the proper license.

The Beaches

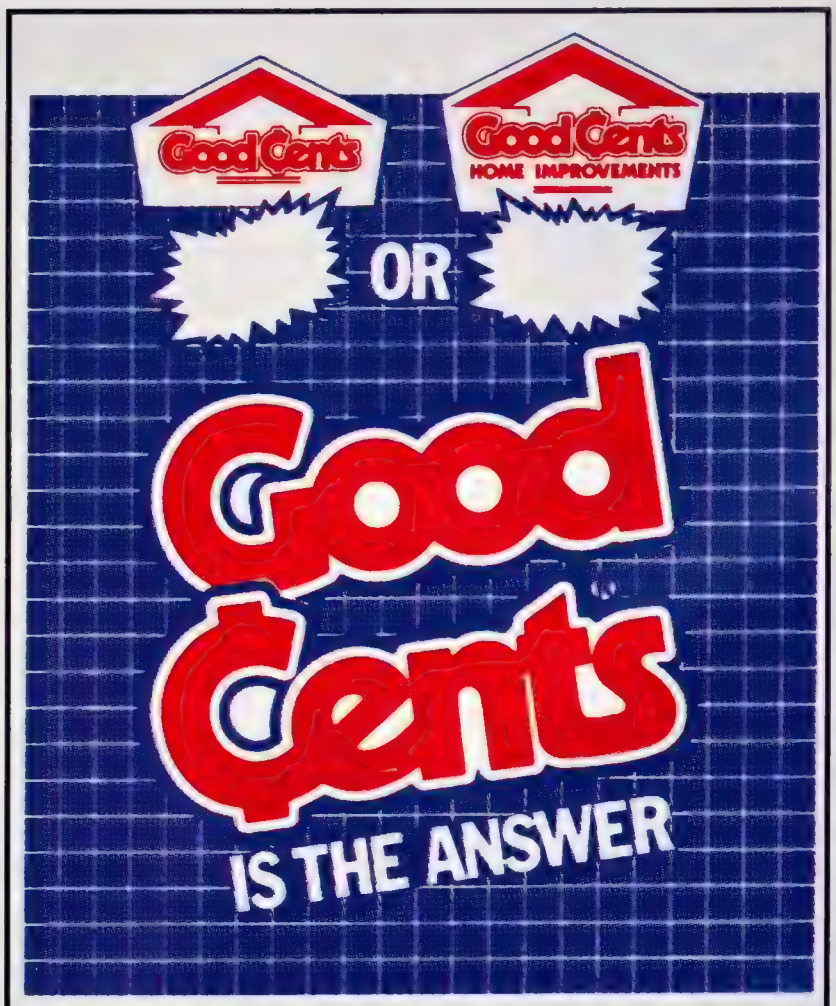
Dazzling white sand, high dunes, and clumps of sea oats and other shoreline vegetation char-

acterize south Walton County's fabulous collection of beaches. Bordered by the brilliant blue-green of the Gulf of Mexico, these 26 miles of beaches include Seagrove, Blue Mountain, Dune Allen, Inlet, Miramar, Frangista, and Grayton, which was voted the "best beach" in the continental United States.

Of course, the traditional beach pastimes of swimming, sailing and boating, jet-skiing, and sunbathing are popular here. Just off the beaches, however, is another world that fascinates nearly everyone. The calm, clear waters of the Gulf of Mexico invite residents and visitors alike to don snorkle mask and fins and slip into an enchanting, aquatic environment full of unique life forms and brilliant colors.

Grayton Beach State Recreation Area

The lovely white sand beach and rolling sea oats-covered dunes of this 356-acre park are alive with shorebirds, and sea turtles often nest here during the summer months. Pine flatwoods, pine scrub, and picturesque Western Lake and its extensive salt marsh complete the picture of this bit of "natural Florida." Recreational activities at Grayton include camping, picnick-



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ing, swimming, boating and fishing. A leaflet-interpreted, self-guided nature trail begins near the beach parking area. Snacks and limited grocery items are available at the concession. Some facilities are handicapped accessible. The park is open daily from 8 a.m. until sunset. For information: Grayton Beach State Recreation Area, Rt. 2, Box 790-1, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459; (904) 231-4210.

Golf and Tennis

The rolling hills of DeFuniak Springs Country Club (892-3812) golf course combine with open fairways, small greens, and sand traps for an interesting day on the links. The nine-hole course is a par 36 over 3,225 yards. The club's dining room satisfies hungry golfers, and other facilities include a pro shop, meeting rooms, and a tennis court. Accommodations for visitors can be found nearby.

Several resorts located on the beaches in south Walton County have golf courses open to public play. There are four public tennis courts in DeFuniak Springs, and excellent private tennis facilities are available at the beach resorts and condominiums.

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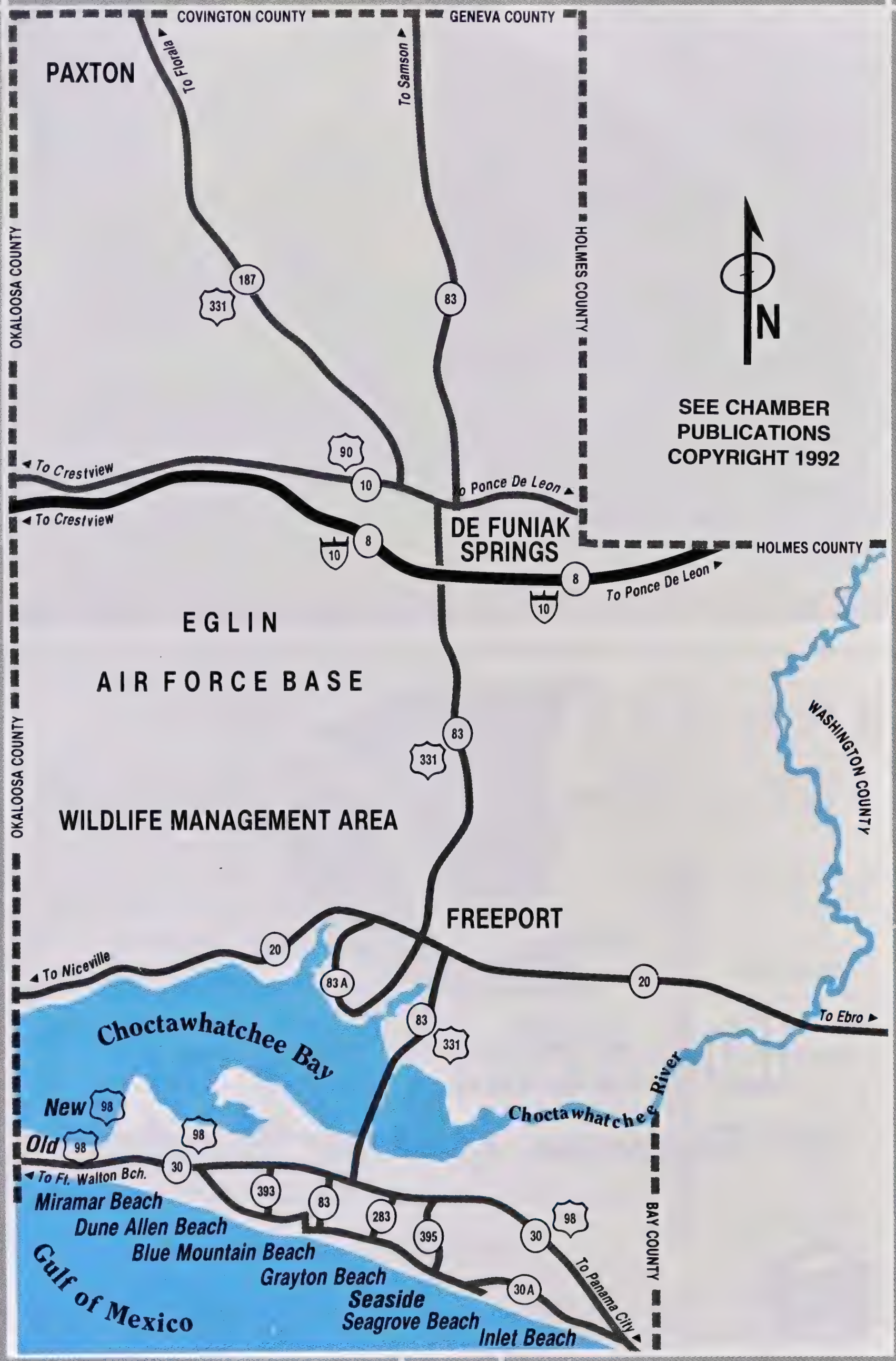

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WALTON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY AND BUYERS' GUIDE

Key to Abbreviations: C = Crestview, D = Destin, DS = DeFuniak Springs, F = Freeport, FWB = Fort Walton Beach, GB = Grayton Beach, M = Marianna, N = Navarre, N = Niceville, P = Pensacola, PC = Panama City, PCB = Panama City Beach, S = Seaside, SB = Seagrove Beach, SRB = Santa Rosa Beach, V = Valparaiso
Unless otherwise noted, area code is 904.

ACCOUNTANTS

Craig Stinson Robinson, CPA 892-0888
POB 1257, DS 34233

Creel, Bryan & Gallagher, CPA 837-0398
POB 1469, 1234 Airport Rd., D. 32541

Johnene Marcum, CPA 231-5735
Rt. 6, Box 586DD, PCB 32413

Larry M. Posey, CPA 837-5355
5134 Lakeview Dr., D 32541

Saltmarsh, Cleveland & Gund, CPA 769-9491
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POB 5559, D 32541

Green & Green 892-7213
POB 609, DS 32433

George Ralph Miller 892-5153
POB 687, DS 32433

Ramey & Davis 892-2108
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Gulfarium (Gulf Exhibition Corp.) 244-5169
Hwy. 98, FWB 32548

Museum of the Sea and Indian 837-6625
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The Track Recreation Center 654-4668
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POB 5008, Hwy. 90, DS 32433

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POB 6099, D 32540

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POB 586, DS 32433

Destin Bank 837-8100
POB 248, D 32540

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POB 6339, D 32541

First Federal Savings Bank 892-3161
POB 610, DS 32433

First Union Bank 837-5555
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POB 432, DS 32433

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Crystal Beach Campgrounds 837-6447
2825 Hwy. 98 E., D 32541

Emerald Coast RV Resort 267-2808
Rt. 1, Box 280, Hwy. 30-A, SRB 32459

Holiday Travel Park 837-6334
5380 Hwy. 98, D 32541

Seagrove Beach Campground 231-5544
Rt. 2, Box 628, SRB 32459

Sunset King Resort 892-7229
Rt. 5, Box 120-C9, DS 32433

CHARTER BOATS

Break-A-Way 837-6977
POB 1093, D 32541

Charter Boat Lady Em 837-6717
POB 624, D 32541

Flying Eagle Charters 837-4986
96-4 Yacht Club, FWB 32548

Moody's Deep Sea Fishing 837-1293
POB 68, D 32541

Sweet Jody V 837-2222
116 Hwy. 98 E., Destin 32541

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Okaloosa-Walton Child Care Services, Inc. 892-4431
Rt. 7, Box 860, DFS 32433

CHIROPRACTORS

Johnson Chiropractic Clinic 834-2118
POB 486, Paxton 32438

Dr. P.A. Roberts 892-7432
Rt. 7, Box 1288, DS 32433

CHRISTMAS TREES

Strickland's Christmas Tree Farm 892-2656
Rt. 4, Box 192, DS 32433

CIVIC/SERVICE/POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

Republican Party of Walton Co. 892-2396
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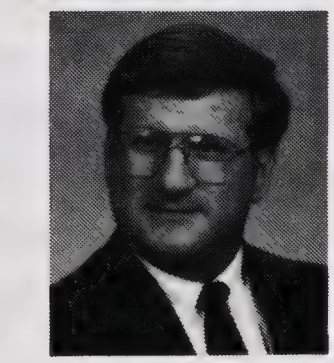

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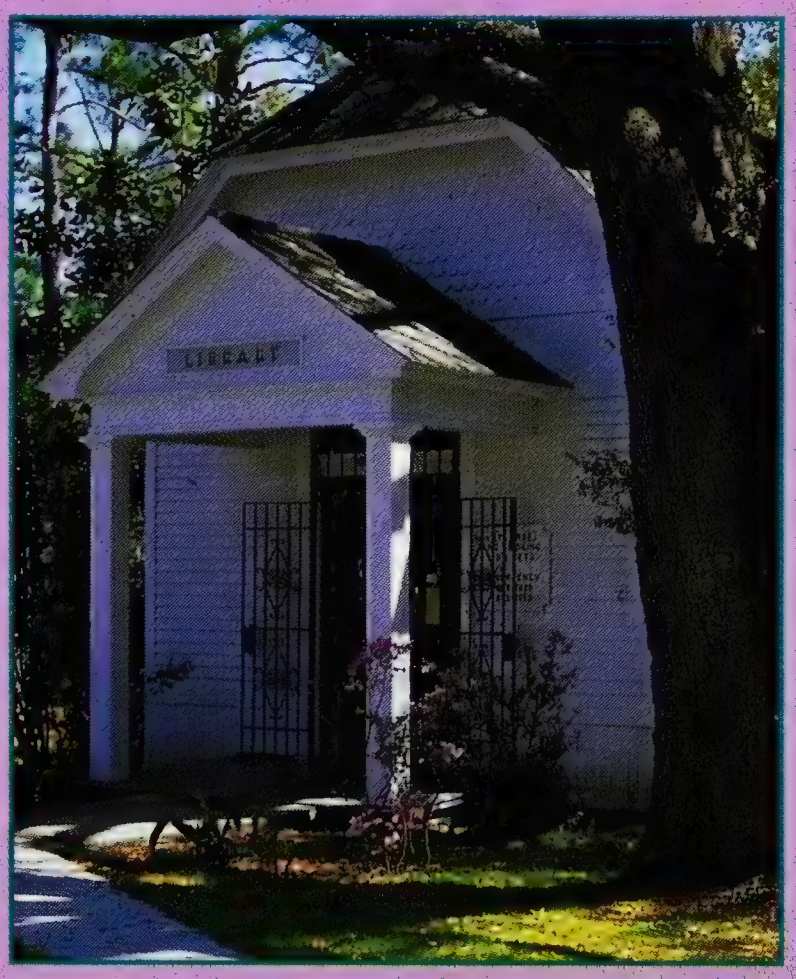
THINGS TO SEE ...AND DO

Walton County is rich in history; many of the things that are fun to do today have their roots in the past. Some old ideas have taken on a new form. Here's just a sample of what there is to see and do in Walton County.



Pattie Lanier

While away the hours of an afternoon with a first-edition book at what is believed to be the oldest public library in Florida still in its original building, the Walton DeFuniak Public Library.

LAKEWOOD

At 345 feet above sea level, Lakewood is the highest point in Florida. Located in northwestern Walton County, the 900-foot by 400-foot plateau is now the site of a state park.

HISTORIC DEFUNIAK SPRINGS

Circle Drive, encompassing beautiful Lake DeFuniak, provides a panoramic view of historic homes, from quaint "Dream Cottage" to magnificent "Idlewild." These homes are privately owned and may be enjoyed only from the street. The Walton County Heritage Association's Walking Tour brochure is available at the Chamber of Commerce office.

THE CHAUTAUQUA AUDITORIUM

Built in 1909, the original building was host to the Florida Chautauqua programs until the Great Depression when the Hall and grounds were sold to the City of DeFuniak. Today, it is used for social and community functions and is home to the Walton County Chamber of Commerce and Chautauqua Festival offices.

WALTON DEFUNIAK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Located at 100 Circle Drive, this charming library is believed to be the oldest public library in Florida still in its original building. An historic and architectural gem, the library contains many rare books which date to the library's beginning in 1886 and a medieval armor collection.

SUNBRIGHT

Once the home of Florida Governor Sidney J. Catts, who took office in 1917, this large, recently renovated home at the corner of Live Oak Ave. and Hwy. 331 is now a bed and breakfast inn.

CHAUTAUQUA FESTIVAL

Held every spring in DeFuniak Springs, the Chautauqua Festival includes concerts, children's and adult theater, school programs and Festival Day, which features a parade, entertainment, arts and crafts, kid's activities and fireworks. For information, call 892-9494.

CHAUTAUQUA WINERY

Visitors are welcome to tour and see the wine-making process at the Winery located at I-10 and Hwy. 331. For a fee, visitors can taste the local "vin," (first bottled commercially in 1990) and take a souvenir glass home. For information, call 892-5887.

WALTON COUNTY FAIR

Held during the second week of October at the Walton County Fairgrounds, this is a traditional county fair with all the trappings.

EDEN STATE GARDENS AND MASION

Located in Point Washington on County Rd. 395, north of U.S. 98, the Eden Mansion and its ten fine acres overlook Choctawhatchee Bay. Built in 1897, the house has a typical southern garden of sweeping lawns, stately trees, and flowering shrubs and flower beds. Tours. 231-4214.

SEASIDE

Located on the Gulf of Mexico in the community of Seagrove Beach, Seaside's Victorian houses, reminiscent of turn-of-the-century English resorts, have been featured in travel and architectural magazines all over the country.

SEASIDE CONCERT SERIES

Seaside's open-air amphitheater is the setting for a variety of cultural programs throughout the year. Call 1-800-635-0296 for information.

GRAYTON BEACH FINE ARTS FESTIVAL

Held each May in historic Grayton Beach (which was recently voted number one in continental U.S.), the festival features fine art from artists throughout the United States. The public can view and purchase the artwork during the one day event, which is open to the public at no cost. For more information, call 231-5045.

NATIONAL WATER-SKI CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT

Shortline Lake Estate is the 1992 AND 1993 host for this exciting event. For further information, call 837-6106..

SPORTSFEST

On the first three weekends in November, the beaches of South Walton County are the scene for this annual event. Held at various resorts in the beach area, the fest includes a variety of activities geared toward the outdoors sports enthusiast. For detailed information, please call 1-800-822-6877.

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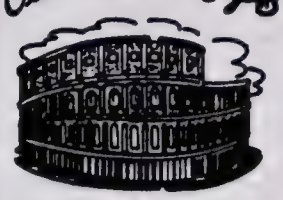

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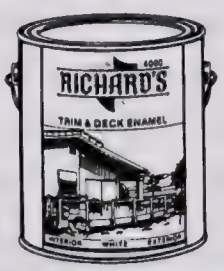

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Burger King: Hwy. 331 South at I-10, DeFuniak Springs, 892-2423
Busy Bee Cafe: 2 N. 7th St., DeFuniak Springs, 892-6700
Country Willow Cafe, Paradise Island Rd., DeFuniak Springs, 892-9601
Mamie's Restaurant: 9th St. & Hwy. 90, DeFuniak Springs, 892-9839
McDonald's: Hwy. 331 South at I-10, DeFuniak Springs, 892-5226
Mia's Cafe & Gourmet Market, Upstairs at Marie's Hitching Post: Baldwin Ave. at 6th St., DeFuniak Springs, 892-6427
Mom & Dad's Italian Restaurant: Hwy. 90 West, DeFuniak Springs, 892-5812
Pizza Hut: Hwy. 331 South, DeFuniak Springs, 892-7226
Waffle House: Hwy. 331 at I-10, DeFuniak Springs, 892-0300

BEACHES AREA

Bayou Bill's Crab House: Hwy. 98, Santa Rosa Beach, 267-3849
Bud and Alley's: Seaside, Hwy. 30-A, 231-5900
Buster's Oyster Bar & Seafood: 5011 Hwy. 98 E, Destin, 837-4399
Cattle Company Steakhouse: Emerald Coast Plaza, Hwy. 98, Santa Rosa Beach, 267-1238
Criolla's: Hwy. 30-A, Grayton Beach, Santa Rosa Beach
Donut Hole II: Hwy. 98 E Santa Rosa Beach, 267-3239
The Lake Place: Hwy. 30-A, dune-Allen Beach, Santa Rosa Beach, 267-2871
Doubles Pizza of Sandestin: 5160 E. Hwy. 98, Suite 20, Sandestin area, 837-5100 (delivery)
Family Buffet: 747 Hwy. 98E, Destin, 837-1919
Goat Feathers: Hwy. 30-A, Santa Rosa Beach, 267-2627
LeBleau's Cajun Kitchen: Hwy. 98, Santa Rosa Beach, 267-3724
Nick's On The Beach: Hwy. 30-A, Blue Mtn. Beach, Santa Rosa Beach, 267-2117
Prescott's: 4151 Hwy. 98 E., (Beach Route) Destin, 837-1223
Palapas: Grayton Beach, Santa Rosa Beach, 231-5773
Babe's: Bayside at Sandestin Beach Resort, Hwy. 98, Destin, 267-7108
Bay Cafe at the Beach: Rt. 2, Box 7191 (Grayton Beach), Santa Rosa Beach, 231-1666
Bruno's Pizza and Stuff: Hwy. 30-A, Seagrove Beach, 231-1452
Nena's: Musset Bayou Rd., Santa Rosa Beach, 267-3663
Santa Rosa Beach Golf & Beach Club: Hwy 30-A, dune-Allen Beach, Santa Rosa Beach, 267-2305
Sandestin Beach Hilton: Hwy. 98 E. at Sandestin, Destin, 267-9500
Seagrove Wheelhouse Restaurant: Hwy. 30-A, Seagrove Beach, 231-5760

BAYSIDE

Nick's at Basin Bayou: Hwy. 20 at Basin Bayou, Freeport, 835-2222

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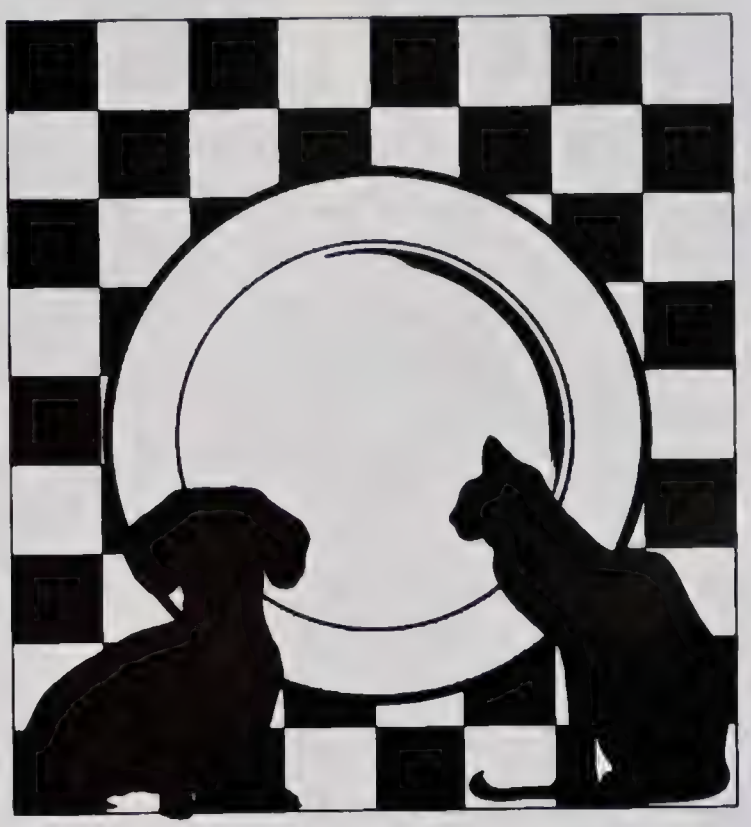

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FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

ACCOMMODATIONS: More than 3,000 units are ranged along the beaches in south Walton County. These include hotel rooms as well as cottages and condominiums. There are motels, rental apartments and bed & breakfasts in DeFuniak Springs.

AUTOMOBILE AND DRIVER LICENSES: License plates may be purchased at the Walton County Courthouse (892-8115) on Nelson Ave. in DeFuniak Springs. The Driver License Examining Office (892-8086) is located in DeFuniak Springs on Hwy. 83 N. at the Walton County Fairgrounds.

CLIMATE: The annual average temperature is 69.9 degrees F. Monthly annual averages range from a January low of 53.3 degrees to a July high of 81.2 degrees. Annual average rainfall is 65.70 inches. Prevailing winds are southwesterly.

DEMOGRAPHICS: The current population of Walton County is approximately 29,000, projected to reach 43,500 by the year 2,000. The average age of Walton Countians is 38.6; median age, 35.8.

EDUCATION: Walton Countians are proud of their educational system. A low student-teacher ratio of 14:1 makes possible more individual attention for pupils. Ongoing in-service activities for teachers hone skills and update knowledge.

The Walton County School Board Citizens' Advisory Committee, consisting of citizens, student council presidents, and educators, meets monthly to discuss countywide issues and make recommendations which benefit the entire school system.

High school students and adults find an excellent job prehistory program at Walton County Vocational-Technical Schools whose new facility opened in 1988. Day and evening courses are offered; subsidies and scholarships are available. In addition, Okaloosa-Walton Community College uses Vo-Tech classrooms for basic coursework toward a GED degree. For details about Vo-Tech programs call 892-8105. Higher education is provided by Okaloosa-Walton Community College (678-5111) whose main campus is at 100 College Boulevard in Niceville. In DeFuniak Springs, OWCC classes offered at the Chautauqua Neighborhood Center run the gamut from adult basic education to vocational training to liberal arts.

ESTABLISHING LEGAL RESIDENCY: To become a resident of the state, you must file a Declaration of Domicile with the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Walton County Courthouse, DeFuniak Springs.

GOVERNMENT: Walton County is governed by a county commission; each of the three incorporated cities has a mayor and a city council. The county seat is DeFuniak Springs.

HEALTH CARE: Walton Regional Hospital, 21 College Ave., DeFuniak Springs (892-5171). Convalescent centers are located in DeFuniak Springs, and Sandestin. There is also a County Health Unit (892-8015).

LOCATION AND AREA: Walton County is located in the Panhandle of northwestern Florida and extends from the Gulf of Mexico on the south to the Alabama state line on the north. Covering 1,066 square miles, Walton is Florida's seventh largest county.

MEDIA: Daily newspapers: Panama City News-Herald, Pensacola News-Journal, Northwest Florida Daily News. Weekly: DeFuniak Herald-Breeze and Beach Breeze. Radio stations include WGTX and WZEP, both AM; and WLGH and WWAV, FM stations. Television stations are WJHG and WMBB out of Panama City; WDHN and WTVY from Dothan, Alabama; and WEAR out of Pensacola. Cable service is available.

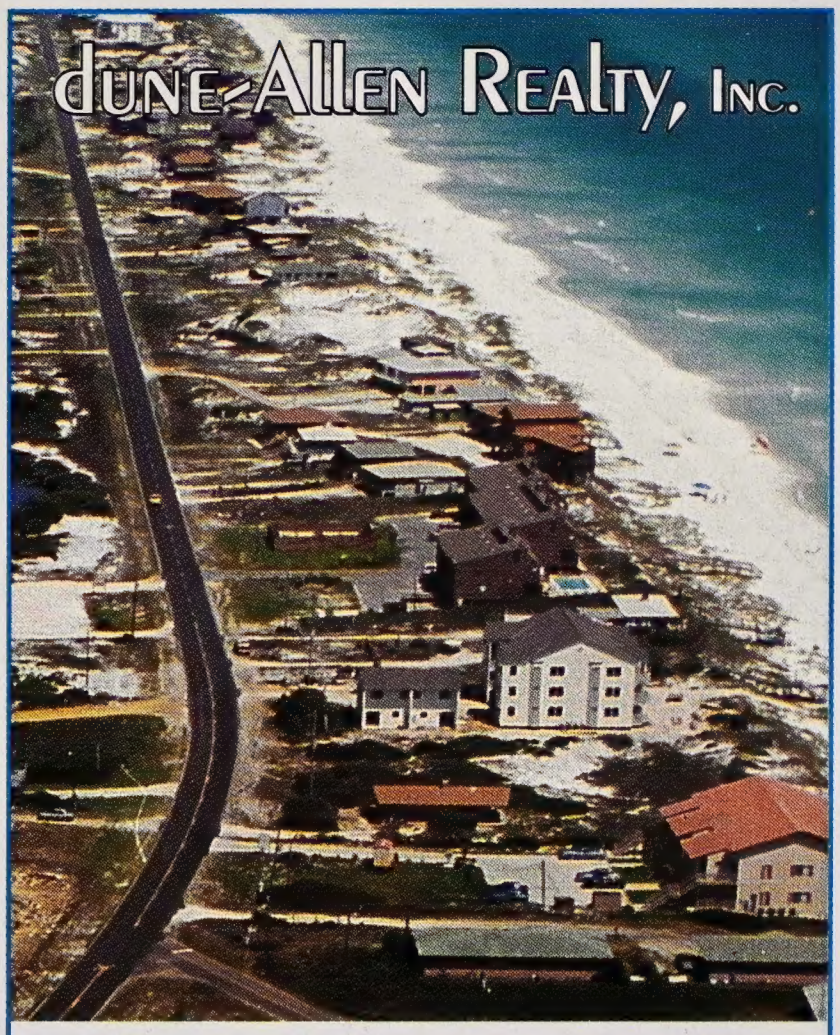
PROTECTIVE SERVICES: DeFuniak Springs Police Department: 892-2712; Fire Department: 892-2211; Walton County Sheriff's Department: 892-8111.

TRANSPORTATION: Major highways serving the area: U.S. 331, which runs north-south; U.S. 90, U.S. 98, S.R. 20, and Interstate 10 running east-west. The nearest I-10 interchange is within the city limits of DeFuniak Springs. Rail service is via the CSX Railroad.

The nearest airport is DeFuniak Springs Municipal (892-3609), with a 3,200-foot paved runway. The nearest commercial service is out of Okaloosa Air Terminal, 40 miles away. In DeFuniak Springs, a Greyhound Trailways Bus Lines terminal is located at 2 E. Baldwin Avenue (892-5913). The nearest navigable waterway is the Intracoastal Waterway through Choctawhatchee Bay; port facilities are available at La Grange Bayou Port in south Walton County.

UTILITIES: Electricity: Gulf Power Co. & Alabama Electic Cooperative; Water: City of DeFuniak Springs; Natural Gas: Okaloosa Gas; Telephone: Central Telephone Co. of Florida.

VOTER REGISTRATION: One may register to vote at the Office of the Supervisor of Elections, Walton County Courthouse, Hwy. 90 E. and Nelson, DeFuniak Springs, and at the South Walton office of the Walton County Chamber of Commerce. Residents of the three municipalities may register for the city elections at City Hall in the appropriate community.



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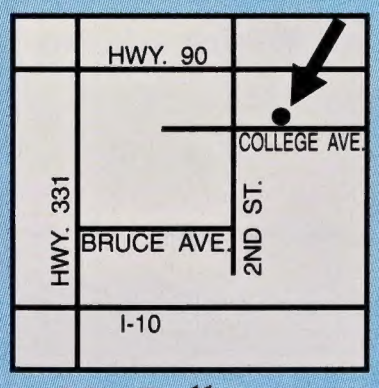

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Vol. 18, No. 18
FDLE chief nixes Topsail deal
By Bill Runge and Clodt Brownfield
Federal investigations into the failure of two thrifts and the largest land deal in Walton County history will delay the state's purchase of environmentally sensitive Topsail Hill.
Florida's chief law enforcement officer has requested the governor and Cabinet delay any decision on the purchase of property in Topsail Hill.
In a letter to Gov. Lawton Chiles and the Cabinet, Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner James T. "Tim" Moore said he wanted the state to put any purchase on hold until federal investigations into land deals that created the properties were completed.
The state had planned to buy part of the Topsail Hill land in December. The deal was delayed after questions arose about the appraisals on the properties involved.
Although the sale has been delayed while the appraisals are under review, Moore's letter is the first official indication that the delays are related to the federal investigations.
Although the Justice Department won't confirm it, it has been widely reported that grand juries in Philadelphia, Pensacola and Houston have been looking into the land deals and the activities of Hill Financial Savings and Loan of Red Hill, Pa., and Vision Bank of Texas in connection with the valved the purchase of more Emerald Coast Joint Ventures than 20,000 acres of land held deal in 1986.
Moore wrote that federal officials informed his department that indictments are "imminent" and are expected to be returned in connection with the federal probes.
The ECJV land deal, which
See Deal, page 3A
Deputy, pro trapper collar 'gator in Destin
By Jennifer Howard and Karen MacGregor
There's a first time for everything, Okaloosa County Deputy Barney Collette would agree. And this weekend, the 13-year veteran of the sheriff's department was called upon to "collar" his first alligator. It was, Collette noted, "really something different."
Saturday morning, Collette and Deputy John Laird responded to a 6 a.m. call from a guest at the Cabana Club
have called the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission.
"I was going to leave him alone," Collette commented. "That's their thing."
But the gator was intent on getting into the Sea Oats. He was trying to climb the stairs onto the porch. Collette said he was afraid it would get under the porch or somewhere they couldn't get to it.
"He was kind of an old alligator and not in real good shape," he said. "He might have
they consider anything over five feet dangerous," he added.
The deputies tried to turn the alligator with a board, but the 2-by-4 broke.
"He was hissing and snapping and clapping his tail," Collette reported.
The deputy had some rope in his car. He made a noose and managed to get close enough to loop it over his snout.
"I took care of that end," Collette quipped.
The folks at the Sea Oats took the morning's excitement with real humor.

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The Destin Log